

Spring 1-15-2006

# ENG 2901-001: The Structure of English

Buck

*Eastern Illinois University*

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**ENGLISH 2901--The Structure of English**

Dr. Buck, Professor

Office: Coleman Hall 3040

Telephone: Office: 581-5012 (Please leave voice mail if I'm not there)

Mailbox: English Dept Office, Room 3155 Coleman

Office Hours: 9:00-9:30 MWF and by appointment

Required textbook: *Understanding English Grammar* by Martha Kolln, 1994, 7th edition.

Please always bring your textbook and worksheets to class.

My office is on a busy hallway. If my office door is closed, please knock. My students always come first--if there is another faculty member in my office, please interrupt us.

**Course Objective**

This course offers a description and analysis of the Standard American English grammatical system. We will describe the difference between the grammar of speech and the grammar of writing from a cognitive perspective, so the class will focus on how the study of grammar reveals much about the workings of the human mind. In our discussion, we will integrate the effect of language attitudes on our understanding of grammatical systems. Course readings are attached. Please note that we will go faster or slower depending on the needs of the class.

**Course Evaluation**

Grade for the course will be based on an average of 5 equally-weighted exams (see the attached sheet for approximate scheduling). In addition, daily home assignments will be required. You must complete these home assignments by each class meeting, as we will be discussing them in class. All exams will be based on these home assignments.

The home assignments are an integral part of this course. Periodically, I will collect homework assignments (unannounced). A student's final grade for the course will be lowered if the student comes to class three times unprepared with home assignments. Please always feel free to meet with me during office hours (and by appointment) or call me if you would like more individualized discussion of your work and progress.

**Tardiness**

Please be on time for class; habitual tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful of other class members. I will be taking roll each morning as soon as class begins. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to notify me after class so that I take your name off the absence sheet. If you fail to notify me on the day you are late, you will be recorded as absent. Please do not ask me for a letter of recommendation if you are habitually tardy or absent from class or are unprepared with home assignments.

### **Active Attendance**

You are expected to attend every class as scheduled because teaching/learning requires dialogue and without you we can have no dialogue. Our class work on the analysis of linguistic utterances is a crucial part of this course; occasionally, too, you will be doing some group problem-solving in class. Come to class ready to articulate your knowledge and formulate your questions for the class. Challenge yourself by attempting to answer the questions of the other students and volunteering at least one response at every class meeting.

Please note that more than five unexcused absences in this course is grounds for failing the course. Any student who misses more than three excused or unexcused absences must make an appointment with me to discuss additional work required to make up for the hours of class time missed.

#### **Definition, according to university policy, of an excused absence:**

1. University obligation, in which case you will need to present me in advance with a letter explaining the purpose and date of your upcoming absence.
2. Emergency or medical illness, in which case you will need to notify me by leaving a message on my voice mail at 581-5012 before class begins on the day of your absence. You must present a note from health services when you return to class.

Only students with an excused absence on the day of any scheduled exam may take an alternative exam, of different format, within the week of the scheduled exam.

I will expect you to find out from someone in the class what you've missed so that you'll be prepared for the next class meeting. Worksheets will only be distributed once; it is your responsibility to photocopy assignments from another student if you are absent.

An absence policy is important so that I can be equitable to all members of the class and so that you will be successful in this class. I'm looking forward to working with you on our study of English syntax.

### **Information for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

### **Grading Scale**

Grading Scale in this course is always 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; below 60% = F.

### **What to do in Case of Emergency**

If we have an emergency in class, go promptly to inform Jean Toothman, Department Secretary (Room 3135) and Dana Ringuette, Chair (Room 3341). If they are unavailable, use phone in the English Department office (Room 3135) to dial 911.

## **Course Readings for English 2901**

**Week One:** Introduction to the class. What is grammar? What is language? Kolln, pp. 3-14.

**Week Two:** How do we represent the internal structure of words and what does that representation tell us about the way words mean?

"Words and Word Classes," Kolln, pp. 239-241

"Morphemes," Kolln, pp. 242-253

Jan 16 Holiday

**Week Three:** What does the notion of word class contribute to our understanding of the form, function, and meaning of words?

"The Form Classes," Kolln, pp. 254-279

### **EXAM #1**

**Weeks Four, Five, and Six:** Why are structure class words differentiated from form class words?

"The Structure Classes," Kolln, pp. 280-304

"Expanding the Main Verb," Kolln, pp. 60-69; 73-75

"Pronouns," Kolln, pp. 305-322

Feb 17 Holiday

### **EXAM #2**

**Weeks Seven and Eight:** What does the grammar of basic sentences reveal about the creativity and constraints of language? What grammatical subtleties suggest that the verb phrase is the powerhorse of the English sentence?

"The Grammar of Basic Sentences," Kolln, pp. 15-16

"Sentence Patterns," Kolln, pp. 17-59

**Week Nine:** How does the notion of transformations explain the feature of economy in our internal grammar?

"Transforming the Basic Patterns," Kolln, pp. 92-110 and 75-86

### **EXAM #3**

**Week Ten: Spring Break**

**Weeks Eleven and Twelve:** What behavioral characteristics of adverbials make them troublesome to account for adequately?

"Modifiers of the Verb: Adverbials," Kolln, pp. 114-135

**Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen:** What variety of grammatical functions are performed by the English noun phrase?

"The Noun Phrase Functions: Nominals," Kolln, pp. 176-202

### **EXAM #4**

**Weeks Fifteen and Sixteen:** How can knowledge of the different functions of adjectival phrases help us in our writing of more powerful sentences?

"Modifiers of the Noun: Adjectivals," Kolln, pp. 136-175

**EXAM #5 (final exam to be given during finals week)**